

ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00
	DS-00	EAP-00	EUR-00	VC-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	CAC-00	VCE-00	AC-00	NRC-00
	NSAE-00	NSCCE-00	OES-00	OIG-00	OMB-00	PA-00	MCC-00
	PM-00	GIWI-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	FMPC-00	SP-00
	SSO-00	SS-00	TRSE-00	IIP-00	SCRS-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/001W	

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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8349
INFO AMEMBASSY LOME IMMEDIATE
ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 000775

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/15/2014
TAGS: [GH](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [TO](#)
SUBJECT: TOGO DEVELOPMENTS: ECOWAS AND GILCHRIST OLYMPIO
SAY ELECTION MUST GO ON

Classified By: Polchief Scott Ticknor, reason 1.5 (B/D).

¶1. (C) Summary: ECOWAS President Tandja issued a press release April 22, sent to PolChief by Executive Director Chambas, condemning the 3 am statements of Togolese Interior Minister Boko and restating ECOWAS's commitment to retaining the scheduled April 24 date for the Togo election. Chambas told PolChief he was encouraged that the election could go off relatively peacefully. although Boko's statement could make the situation more volatile. On behalf of Nigerian President Obasanjo, he is inviting opposition leader Gilchrist Olympio and Faure Gnassingbe for a meeting in Abuja on April 25 (Olympio said yes and Chambas believes Gnassingbe will also agree.) Olympio is determined to go ahead with the election as scheduled. Ghanaian refugee officials and NGOs are preparing for a possible influx of refugees from Togo.
End summary.

ECOWAS' Chambas: The Election Should Go On

¶2. (C) On April 22, PolChief spoke with ECOWAS Executive Director Mohammed Ibn Chambas, who was in Accra on his way to Lome. When asked about Minister of Interior Boko's call for postponing the Togo election, Chambas said Nigerian President Obasanjo, Ghana's President Kufuor and Niger's President Tandja had quickly consulted today (from Indonesia and Niger) and agreed on an ECOWAS position that the election should go on as scheduled. ECOWAS has issued a press release to this effect (see para 8). In addition, Chambas said Obasanjo had asked him to invite Gilchrist Olympio and Faure Gnassingbe for a meeting in Abuja on Monday, April 25. Olympio agreed today and Gnassingbe had recently agreed in Niamey that this would be a good idea, according to Chambas.

¶3. (C) Chambas knew this would be a difficult period, but said that before the Boko pronouncement, he was feeling encouraged about Togo's election. He credited the security forces with showing restraint, noting that opposition leader Akitani Bob had been campaigning in northern Togo without incident or restriction of movement. Akitani had called President Tandja to apologize for not being able to break his campaign for the recent meeting in Niamey, offering to go to Niger on Saturday, April 23. Chambas said his meeting with Olympio today was also encouraging -- Olympio had some complaints, but by and large was ready for the election to go forward. ECOWAS has 150 observers on the ground in Togo (compared to the 30 they had for the December 2004 Ghana election).

¶4. (C) According to Chambas, Togolese leaders see Togo as heading toward revolution or reform. He believes there is a consensus for reform and a recognition that, whoever wins the election, the only hope for Togo is a national government of reconciliation. The biggest danger is from militant party supporters on both sides, who appear to be behind recent skirmishes. He discounted reports of deaths resulting from last weekend's violence. According to Chambas, no one has produced evidence that individuals died because of these events, speculating that people are falsely identifying as political brutality bodies of petty criminals killed by mob violence.

15. (C) Despite his overall optimism, Chambas thought Boko's actions (which he termed "unilateral") could trigger dissent and make the situation in Togo more volatile. Chambas plans to go to Abuja on April 23 to meet President Obasanjo and prepare for Monday's meeting with Olympio and Gnassingbe.

Olympio Ready for Election

16. (C) Opposition leader Gilchrist Olympio stated in a BBC interview on April 22 that the opposition is determined to go forward with this election on April 24 as planned, despite Boko's call for postponement. A top Olympio assistant (also a relative) confirmed to PolChief this was the opposition position, repeating Olympio's statement on the BBC that Bokos' actions reflect a sense that the police and military, who just voted early, supported the opposition, not the government. The assistant confirmed that Olympio was not/not planning to go to Togo for the election because it was not safe for him.

Ghana Preparing for Possible Refugee Influx

17. (U) The GOG and UNHCR have been intensifying their preparations for a possible influx of Togolese refugees into Ghana. They have prepared five sites (four in the Volta region) which can accommodate tens of thousands of people. They hope that many refugees would rely on hospitality from family, friends, and good will from their ethnic Ewe brethren. Some Ghana-based NGOs are preparing for a possible refugee crisis and have sent staff to the border area.

Press Statement

18. (U) Following is an informal Embassy translation of the press statement in French issued by President Tandja on behalf of ECOWAS on April 22, 2005. We have faxed original copies to AF/W and Embassy Lome.

President Mamadou Tandja, in his capacity in ECOWAS, follows with grave concern the evolution of the situation in the Republic of Togo, and the message from the Minister of Interior to the international press and diplomatic corps on April 22 at 3 am which called on the interim President to suspend the ongoing electoral process and put in place a transition period until certain measures which he (the Interior Minister) recommended on his own could be put in place.

This declaration came only two days after President Tandja hosted a very important and fruitful meeting in Niamey of representatives of five political parties involved in the election and two days before the April 24 election. The President forcefully condemns this irresponsible initiative, which undermines the efforts of ECOWAS and of the international community, which is so deeply engaged on behalf of the Togolese people and strongly desires to see the beginning in Togo of a durable era of peace and democracy.

The President on behalf of ECOWAS reaffirms the commitment of ECOWAS to support the electoral process underway in Togo, as required by the constitution. He rejects any effort and action taken to disturb public order and bring the country into chaos.

The President states that the electoral process must continue and that the election must remain on the agreed upon date of April 24, 2005. The President asks the Togolese authorities to take, together with the ECOWAS representative in Togo, all necessary measures to assure a good electoral process, which has already begun for some parts of the Togolese population.

The President recalls the terms of his communique from Niamey on April 20, 2005 on the responsibility of candidates, parties, or groups of parities in the election. The President appeals to the patriotic and civic sentiments of all political classes of Togo as they come out of these difficult times, which they do not deserve.

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